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Curriculum Studies: Advances and Challenges in the Internationalization Process

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Introduction

At the present moment in the XXI century, the curriculum field is experiencing a process of internationalization, of which the first signs are being felt (Pinar, 2004, 2006b). Transnational spaces were created, where academics from different places seek to participate in the refitting and decentralizing of their own knowledge traditions, and also to negotiate a reciprocal trust indispensable for collective work. The internationalization of a field, that is so deeply affected by distinct national cultures, has demanded new languages and new audiences which can create new narratives.

In chronological and intellectual terms, the internationalization movement, which is accelerating, follows the Reconceptualization, which at the beginning of the Seventies, challenged the hegemony of the instrumental approach, dominant for 50 years. In that moment, a new paradigm emerged, centered on the purpose of *comprehension* of the curricular process. Today, another paradigm change is being expected, the contours of which are being outlined.

Some new spaces put in evidence the intensity of the internationalization process. In 2001, the International Association for the Advancement in Curricular Studies was formed, mostly due to an undertaking by William Pinar, professor of the University of British Columbia, in Vancouver. Triennial meetings have already been organized in China (2003) and in Finland (2006). New meetings are expected to take place in South Africa in 2009 and in Rio de Janeiro in 2012 (Gough, 2003; Pinar, 2003, 2006a).

The Portuguese-Brazilian Colloquiums about Curricular Questions between us, constitute one of the initiatives that can be associated with the internationalization of the field. In addition to scholars from Portugal and Brazil, the Colloquiums have propitiated the participation of researchers from the United States, Argentina, Spain, Finland, France and Canada. In this way, specialists from different countries are brought together contributing to the socialization of questions and theories of general and local interest.

The central themes of these past Colloquiums, including the one that is developing right now, express certain tendencies on the course of

the links that have been bringing together Brazilian and Portuguese researchers. The themes of the 4 Colloquiums were, respectively, (a) Curriculum and Production of Identities; (b) Curriculum: To Think, to Invent, to Differ; (c) Globalization and Education: Challenges for Policies and Practices; and (d) Curriculum, Theories and Methods.

A closer look into the introduction of the meeting's annals allows to observe that the researchers attention have expressively turned toward the relation between curriculum and school knowledge and between curriculum and culture, classic themes in the study of curriculum, which seems to continue arousing the interest of the participants. In this wide panorama, some more specific themes stood out - identity, difference, inequality, inclusion, curricular policies - approached as local realities and also within the international context (Pacheco, 2002; Moreira, Pacheco and Garcia, 2004; Moreira and Pacheco, 2006).

The focal points, observed in those Colloquiums confirm the point of view of Silva (1999a, 1999b), for whom all curriculum theories have as a backdrop the discussion of the knowledge to be taught to the students.. However, adds Silva (1999a), the relative question about what to teach is never apart from the other one: what is expected of the students to become? In short, the preoccupation with school knowledge and with the students' identity have deserved the attention of researchers from different countries. The hope is that those (and other) themes will come to inspire studies that could increment the internationalization of the field and contribute to a greater sophistication of its tenor, and also consolidate the researchers commitment to the social justice and ecological balance (Pinar,2006b).

In this text, I present some reflections about the aforementioned process of internationalization, considering the implied advances and challenges. I raise some hypothesis about its possible directions. I don't propose, however, to discuss how some of the new moment's remarkable events occurred, nor analyze texts and knowledge in them socialized. The developed reflections originated, at least in part, from previously studies about the process of educational transfer. In a research carried out twenty years ago, I analyzed the emergence of the curriculum field in Brazil, under a strong North American influence (Moreira, 1997). Understanding the process of *educational transfer* as a movement of ideas, institutional models and practices from one country to another (Ragatt, 1983), I verified that in the first stage, corresponding to the 20's and 30's up to the end of the 70's, it was conducted in our country, dominantly, an instrumental adaptation of the North American curricular discourse, in the effort to give the transferred material a local color and to make fit our reality.

In the following decades, in which significant political, economic and cultural changes occurred on the national scene and also international, there was an attempt to promote a critical adaptation of materials received from different countries, with the sights on a more autonomous development of the curriculum field. In short, I sustained, in my investigation that the reception of foreign material involved exchanges, lectures, confrontations and resistance, the intensity and subversive potential of which varied in accordance to the local and international circumstances (see Moreira, 2003 as well). I said that:

there is no mechanical transportation of knowledge

from one country to another. Between the transfer and the reception, mediation processes (among them, the energy or the specificity of the receiving context, and also the performance of the agents involved in the transfer) affect the way a certain theory or foreign practice is received, disseminated and applied (Moreira, 1997, p 206)

I re-conceptualized the category of educational transfer in the study in question, in order to overcome simplified models that would reduce the phenomenon to a simple instrument of control and domination, employed by First world countries, easily imposed and received in the Third world. I proposed, on the occasion, an alternative approach, represented by three elements.

The first corresponded to the international context, the analysis of which showed to be indispensable to the understanding of the foreign influence on the Brazilian education in general and on the curriculum field in particular. The second comprehended the Brazilian socioeconomic and political context, having in mind that decisions and curricular activities cannot be isolated from economic, political, and ideological battles fought in the society in general. In the end, the last element consisted of institutional, cultural and ideative contexts. To consider it was fundamental for the understanding of the role played by institutions, proposals and curricular reforms, meetings, thematic studies and taught, discussions, conflicts and alliances among researchers in the development of the field.

In a more recent study (Moreira and Macedo, 2006), it was argued that the contradictory and complex character of the contemporary societies, in a globalized world, no longer permitted a more restricted view of the educational transfer, which would allow the mere transportation of cultural elements produced in the First world to be seen as acceptable. Analyses of the globalization process at the time, already showed the intense movement of information and knowledge (always made easier by unprecedented technological advance), which was happening and continues to happen, albeit unevenly in different parts of the globe. In spite of the possibility (and eventual purpose) of cultural homogenization, the symptoms of tension, contradiction, opposition, convergence and divergence are clear, which make the phenomenon extremely complex.

At the same time as the benefits resulting from this wide mobilization of all kinds of scientific knowledge are being spread, the risks that derive from the pasteurized translation and interpretation by the globalized media in which the broadcasted images of the reality and the views of the world are the ones that benefit the more powerful social groups, are being outlined with more intensity. Thus, different knowledge, ways of life and views of the world meet, dissent, confront, subordinate and renew themselves. If the process can cause homogenization, invasion, destruction of cultural manifestations, on the other hand it can stimulate a critical appropriation of ideas and theories developed by the “other” (Moreira and Macedo, 2006).

From this perspective, rejected is the feasibility of ideas and cultural manifestations in their pure state, not contaminated by others,

susceptible to being transferred from one space to another. Currently, there is a distrust of the usefulness of the concept of educational transfer, the way it was applied in the 80's, it does not seem to manage the multiple and intense exchanges that occur in our globalized world. It was proposed by the study developed by Moreira and Macedo (2006) that the categories *globalization, cultural hybridization and cosmopolitanism* be utilized in a effort to rethink and deepen the notion of educational transfer.

The thematic is resumed in this text, in order to bring up the current internationalization of the field. Taking into consideration the flagrant and significant changes in the world in the last ten years, it makes sense to rethink the process of cultural exchange that can be verified (even more, when there is an attempt to explicitly promote it, the way it has been happening with today's internationalization efforts). As it has been repeatedly expressed (Appadurai,1994), the new global cultural order presents a character that is disjunctive, superposed and complex. In it, the influxes that originate from several metropolises, tend to transform when they form new associations, by assuming a certain degree of consonance with the reality in which they are inserted. In that situation, they are not very useful dichotomous models, such as of the center and periphery or consumers and producers.

I raise the hypothesis that the categories of hybridism and cosmopolitanism continue to offer a significant contribution to the understanding of contemporary cultural interactions. Although lacking certain readjustments and deepening, the referred categories haven't lost their explanatory potential . As I seek to defend my point of view, I will concentrate on the two phenomenon, widening the conceptions previously presented (Moreira and Macedo,2006). On the final considerations I will gather the arguments developed throughout the text, I will point out challenges to be faced by the ones that propose to favour the internationalization of the curriculum field.

In favour of the hybridization category

Pinar (2002) suggests the acceleration of the internationalization process, by means of some principles. I limit myself to discuss two of them, related particularly to the categories that I chose to examine.

In first place, the author affirms to be crucial, that on contact with the scientific production of other countries, the researchers, notably from the so called Third world, should preserve their autonomy and their critical capability, in order to avoid hasty absorption of theories and ideas that are strange to the purposes and specific local interests. In other words, discards the belief on a presumed homogenization, based on which autochthonous productions would weaken and knowledge built in hegemonic centres would be disseminated. Agreeing with Pinar, I defend the feasibility of cultural hybridization process in which elements of distinct origins and hierarchical positions de-territorialize and re-territorialize .

I concentrate then, on the term hybridization, quite common already in analyses of various contemporaneous cultural contacts, separated into diversified scenarios. In education, for example, the curriculum notion itself has been associated with hybridization, since the curriculum would result from an alchemy that selects elements of culture and translate them into environmental data, destined to a specific audience. The curricular discourses have also been analyzed

as hybrid, for combining distinct traditions and disciplinary movements, building links that provide certain consensus (Dussel, Tiramonti, and Birgin, 1998). In the field of the contemporary curriculum, for example, the process seems to mark the development of its internationalization.

Hybridization presents a history filled with colonialism, but also with anti and post-colonial battles, which certainly open new perspectives for the analysis of the contemporary process of cultural, political and social productions, without romanticizing the aspects of plurality and transgression in them implicated (Dussel, 2002). At the present moment in hybridization, different discourses have been incorporated with great speed in certain situations, which ends up leading to a loss of its original markers. As an example of this dynamic, can be cited the appropriation of foreign curricular reforms, marked by the absorption of varied influences, which diluted the characteristics of the original context, disseminating them in a profusion of texts, the sources of which became unrecognizable.

The hybridization operates, then, through the mobilization of distinct discourses in a particular ambit. It articulates not only external models (at times repeating traditional movements from center to the periphery) but also different traditions and theorization. The hybridization supposes a translation process, which places new experiences and directions in contact with others previously available. In the process the established hierarchy of the discourses is interrupted, without necessarily configuring another one, more democratic. In the new hierarchy, some discourses are reaffirmed and sanctioned, while others are neglected and repressed.

According to Beatriz Sarlo (1999), if hybridization is today, an effective method of cultural construction, the materials that enter the caldron can and must be chosen in the freest manner possible, more egalitarian from the institutional and economic point of view. I raise the hypothesis however, that even in international academic meetings, in which the exchanges are desired and desirable, some precautions must be taken. I will speak of some of them.

Relying on Peter Burke (2003), I argue in first place in favour of the importance of clearly defining (or discovering and criticizing), the logic of choices, conscious or unconscious, that can answer in the process for the selection of some items and rejection of others. I also suggest, investigating how and up to what point different elements have been “mixed” and molten as a result of the exchanges and interactions.

Consideration must also be given to the underlying intentions. For Burke, it does not make sense to start from the presupposition that the cultural exchanges are inspired by postures such as tolerance and an open mind. Other interest involve the process and some questions must be asked. What conditions and what limitations are observed in the composition of the spaces organized specifically for the contacts? Which themes and which discourses are favoured in those moments? Which voices reveal themselves to be most powerful? Are there occasions that are more favourable than others for the exchanges to be effective? Why?

Other questions can also be very significant: which factors answer for the mechanisms of acceptance, rejection and adaptation of materials? How the movements of de-contextualization and re-contextualization lapse, based on which a given item is removed from

its original location, later modified to be inserted in another environment ? Are the gains and losses noticeable in all of this dynamism? What results are obtained with these exchanges? Burke admits the possibility of what he calls cultural diglossia - situation in which people show to be capable of transiting between different cultures the same way they would between different languages or linguistic terminology, choosing what they see to be the most appropriate to the situation in which they find themselves. It is worth asking: have we favoured cultural diglossia in our meetings? Have we propitiated synthesis of previously existent forms as well as the emergence of new configurations?

If, as emphasized by Said (cited by Burke, 2003), “the history of all cultures is the history of the cultural borrowing”(p.13), the process of internationalization of the curricular field is seen not only as inevitable but also very welcome. There is no reason to presuppose that a path is being paved for the cultural homogenization. But there is, I add, the need to always discuss how to value and preserve local histories and idiosyncrasies. By defending the intensification of meetings, interactions and exchanges responsible for the undeniable advances in the deepening of the discussion on the field, locally and internationally, as proposed by Burke, I insist on the need to analyze carefully the situations, reactions and consequences implied in these processes.

The argument by Sousa Santos (2002) could, perhaps be useful at this moment. The author emphasizes that globalization promotes homogenization and diversity. He affirms, however that it is necessary to clarify the power relations that catalyze one case as much as the other. Without clarifying that distinction, both results end up becoming equal, which prevents the verification of links and hierarchy between them. This clarification is particularly important for the analysis of the hybridization process that results from the confrontation and/or familiarity in the cultural scenario of tendencies favourable for the homogenization and tendencies oriented towards particularization. Thus, it must be asked how the not necessarily egalitarian relations of power among different countries manifest themselves on the internationalization of the field?

In favour of the cosmopolitanism category

Secondly, as a result of what I have been arguing, the current project for the development of the curriculum field needs to make itself evident as simultaneously international and local. In other words, each of our national and regional fields has to be attentive to the developments that are happening locally and globally.

The intensification of flow between the nations, in reference to the production and circulation of knowledge, caused convergencies, isomorphisms and hybridizations among the distinct national cultures. As I already mentioned on this text, such processes do not necessarily promote a global culture. Culture is by definition, a social process built in the intersection of the universal and the individual. According to Appadurai (cited by Sousa Santos, 2002), culture is the field of differences, of contrasts and comparisons. Culture would be then, in a very simple concept, the fight against uniformity. However, if the intensification of contacts and the interdependency between nations has opened new opportunities for the exercise of respect, ecumenism, solidarity and cosmopolitanism, it is also true that new forms and manifestations of intolerance, chauvinism, racism, xenophobia and imperialism can appear simultaneously. Therefore,

the processes that are moving in the direction of solidarity and cosmopolitanism should be favoured.

In another study (Moreira and Macedo,2006), it was argued in favour of the usefulness of the cosmopolitanism category for the understanding of the cultural exchange process. With basis on Hannerz (1994), the cosmopolitan perspective was seen as originating from a relationship with a plurality of different cultures, expressing a position in relation to diversity, a predisposition to be involved with the other. In other words, it was conceived to correspond with an intellectual position of openness towards diverging cultural experiences, to search for contrast, instead of uniformity.

The cosmopolitan would be an individual free to harvest from a given culture only what would interest him, or to accept it in a wider manner. Accepting foreign culture partially or totally, the cosmopolitan would not limit himself by committing to it; on the contrary he would always guarantee his ability to “find a way out”. The cosmopolitan would use his mobility to incorporate, critically and selectively experiences and meanings learned on his trajectory through various cultural territories. In the global society, the cosmopolitan intellectual would be able to explore the opportunities and effects resulting from the incessant flow of ideas and theories, and also to employ them to avoid homogenization and situations of oppression and imperialism (Moreira and Macedo,2006).

Having suggested the usefulness of the cosmopolitanism category for the analysis of cultural exchanges at the end of the 90's, I find that its significance to the present must be evaluated. To justify it, I refer to Sousa Santos (2002), for whom the use of the term cosmopolitanism might seem inadequate for bringing focus on practices and discourses of resistance in the contemporary world, resulting from his modernist ascendancy. For the author, however, it is worth conceiving it as anti-hegemonic practice and discourse, generated in progressive colligations of subaltern classes or groups and their allies. From this perspective to which I am associated, the cosmopolitan associations aim to fight for the emancipation of groups dominated by mechanisms of discrimination, oppression or exploration. Perhaps because of it, cosmopolitanism does not tend to generate uniformity nor undermine local differences, autonomies and identities.

I refer to Pollock and collaborators (2002), for whom the cosmopolitanism constitutes a project, the conceptual contents and pragmatic character of which, are not and cannot be previously specified, which makes it susceptible to be adapted to situations other than the ones for which it was originally thought. According to the authors suggestions, the cosmopolitan must keep himself totally open, with no definitions or anticipated limitations, resulting from the demands of any societies and discourses.

Cosmopolitanism needs, as an alternative, to consider the need to support the sense of solidarity in changing conditions and to learn to live tenaciously in a terrain of cultural and historical transition. As those territories are negotiated, it will find itself in the interstice of the old and the new, in the confrontation of the past and the present.

We must ask the question : what does it mean to be a cosmopolitan today? Relying on the aforementioned authors, I sustain that the cosmopolitanism that is adequate to the current moment of

transition, does not get confused with romantic notions of a cosmopolitan existence. The point of view that I defend does not rely on ideas of national sovereignty and nationalism, according to them there is the expectation that the cosmopolitan transits in a supposedly synchronic world in ethic terms, despite being inundated by inequalities in political and economic terms..

I rely once again on Pollock and collaborators (2002), for whom the current cosmopolitanism does not derive from the capitalized virtues of Rationality, Universality and Progress. It does not harmonize with the myth of the nation, which is expressed in the idea of the citizen of the universe. On the contrary, the hodiern cosmopolitan can be a victim of modernity, someone who did not reach the social status propitiated by capitalism and ended up, in fact deprived of national belonging. Refugees, people of the Diaspora, migrants and deportees, embody the cosmopolitan community of today.

Today, cosmopolitanism needs to effectively open space to a plurality of histories and behaviour - not necessarily shared regionally, nationally or internationally - which in truth make up the cosmopolitan perspective. More than cosmopolitanism, it is better to think of cosmopolitanisms. When it comes to intellectual debates, this would prevent not only the imprisonment of questions of centre and periphery, but also the imposition of theories and practices that belong to certain historical situations and other places.

Some problems must then be faced. In first place, how to conceive a cosmopolitanism that is not based on the concept of the citizen of the universe? Who is the subject of citizenship? Is citizenship, in fact a common frame, indispensable, universally shared? Should cosmopolitanism be necessarily centered on the production of individual interests, desires and beliefs that the majority of citizenship ideologies seems to request? What would be the basis for the cosmopolitanism that would comprehend solidarity as something other than coincidence and the coordination of individual desires?

Secondly, if cosmopolitanism implies a wider vision, how to think about intimacy in its ambit, without reducing it to the domestic sphere? How to create a space ruled by commitment, that does not constitute a mere background for globalization nor an antidote for nationalism? I suggest that the new concept of cosmopolitanism incorporates focus on projects of an intimate sphere, recognizing that the domestic is not reduced spatially or socially to the private sphere.

With the support of a new comprehension of public, domestic and intimate, it can be suggested that the intimate spheres put legitimate pressure on any vision of solidarity and cosmopolitanism. The cosmopolitan would then correspond to a sign in favour of a situated universalism, capable of inviting other universalisms to a wider debate, based on the recognition of the condition of being situated. In this case a distinct picture of more public universalisms could be feasible.

When looking at the world in a effort to transcend a given time and a given space, it can be verified on how people have been reflecting and acting beyond local. In this way, one can find an immense number of human possibilities. Cosmopolitanism, from this point of view, would not correspond to an idea, but to infinite forms of being. Consequently, the argument steers in favour of a cosmopolitanism that is critical and dialogical, inside of which diversity would be

outlined as an universal project.

...

Final Considerations

In the work that gathers thirty six essays, referent to twenty nine nations, Pinar (2003), proposes to offer a comprehensive view on how the curriculum studies have been developing internationally. In his opinion, the book contributes to “ a complicated talk” or “ instigating talk” (as I prefer to call it) , involved in the internationalization of these studies and the formation of a globally shaped field. The moment in which such processes are refined, frequent and vigorous connections are established, affecting the organization of associations and scientific societies, books, periodicals and events.

The support to the academic talks, that are found in the interior and beyond regional and national borders, constitutes an effort to deepen and socialize the research and the studies that are centered on the content, context and the unfolding of the educational process, of which the curriculum is the organizational and intellectual centre. The results of these talks can represent considerable triumphs to the proposed increase the understanding of the curricular process.

The term talk, as employed by Pinar (2004), and accepted by myself, is referred to the meeting point to which diverse enunciations present in human communication converge. There, a diversity of voices can be heard; different discourses meet, recognize, dissent and relate, without imposing or being imposed. In other words, in instigating talks (more than the complicated) the process of hybridization is inevitably promoted.

In those talks, desired is confluence, distinct ways of thinking, imagining and improvising. but not homogenization. In them, autonomy, respect and cosmopolitanism need to occupy a place of prominence, in order to prevent the belittling and subjugation of local discourses, voices, and interests.

The instigating talks, encouraged in the field of curriculum, will never be totally transparent, marked by concessions, adaptations, appropriations, negotiations and reconciliation that develop without any questioning. On the contrary, the relations of authority and power do not disappear completely, regardless of the direction followed in the context of global education, for which the intention is to strengthen the internationalization of the field. There lies the importance of precautions. At the same time, its not the case to search for an apparent consensus, that would mask tiresome apathy or hidden intentions. In a democratic process, there must be a guarantee of multiplicity, plurality and resistance. What is desired is a vibrant collision of political positions and scientific perspectives, as much as a clear and open conflict of interests (Mouffe,1996).

In the defense of hybridization and cosmopolitanism, perhaps is desirable to add the valorization of tradition, very different from the notion of traditionalism. Tradition allows us to think of our insertion into historicity, and the fact that we are created as subjects by means of different circulating discourses: through tradition the world is given to us and our action in this world is made possible. But tradition needs to transform itself into an element of freedom, because even the most solid of them does not persist naturally or as

consequence of the inertia of the existing . It needs to be affirmed, embraced and cultivated.

There is a need to emphasize the compound, heterogeneous and open character of the tradition.. Varied strategies and interpretations are shown to be possible, which allows different parts or aspects of the tradition to dissent and challenge. In this way elements that are characteristic to the practices in which we are involved disarticulate and re-articulate (Mouffe, 1996). In the process of internationalization of the curricular field, what is hoped is that hybridization and cosmopolitanism, which should mark it, will favour a democratic climate in which challenging talks and useful collisions can occur between various tradition and perspectives.

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Translator's observations:

On page 11 the words *intimo* or *intimidade* can have several meanings, and I am not sure which one is the right one for this situation. I used *intimate* and *intimacy* but it could be:

- *intimo*: intimate, familiar, inner, internal, innermost, near, close, confidential.

- *intimidade*: intimacy, privacy, familiarity,