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Temporary Migrants, Young and Also Students: How to be a Foreign in a Military Institution of Superior Education

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Abstract

This research discusses about the temporary migration of young foreigners who come to Brazil in order to take their higher education. The scenario of this research is the "Escola Naval" (i.e. Brazilian Naval Academy), which promotes the formation of its future Navy officers. The young, before officially entering into mainstream education, spend one year in the "Qualification Stage for Academic Adaptation of Foreign Students", consisting of a period in which these students learn the Portuguese language and also the basic math knowledge with leveling purpose as prerequisites for admission into that institution. In this article, we propose to trace the profile of students who, in 2013, are attending this stage, highlighting their main characteristics, the obstacles encountered and their expectations for the future. Finally, from the reflections made above, we will think about the relevance of this first year of adaption, as well as possible solutions for its improvement.

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1. Introduction

About the relationship between youth and globalized world, we are faced with what Gusmão (2007 as cited in Faria, 2009, p.61) calls "nomadic student displacement", i.e. the disruption of physical, geographical and cultural barriers by the students, who seek in the foreign universities the space they believe to be unique for their future.

In our research, we found that the Higher Education Brazilian Institutions receive contingents of young foreign

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students seeking professional formation in first place, but also the construction of their individual, collective and social identity.

The focus of this research is young temporary immigrant students who left their home countries and conducted their training in a military high education, specifically in our case of study young Africans and Asians who currently study at the Brazilian Naval Academy (EN) aiming to understand how they experience, in a daily basis their difficulties in adapting to the local culture, to the language barrier and to the military and academic life.

A first survey was conducted in the bank of theses and dissertations from the Brazilian institution: Coordination of Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES); and also the website "google", using as search criteria the following keywords: "temporary migration" and "foreign students" in the period from 2004 to 2012. In this first selection, only a thesis of Subuhana (2005), and two dissertations, one of Mungoi (2006) and another Mourao (2006), were found, besides seven articles that focused on temporary migration, with a view of superior education, to Brazil and Portugal, of young people from Africa, belonging to the group of portuguese speaking languages: Angola, Cabo Verde, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique and Sao Tome and Prince. Such a situation occurring becomes relevant in the expansion of studies on the subject.

The main driving wheel explored was the introductory teaching and the relationships built within the classroom, beyond the difficulties and potentialities that might by chance exist, as the adaptation to academic and military life in a foreign country.

Initially, we will present the main concepts related to student immigration, in particular the temporary one, to the legislation and to the bilateral agreements and interchanges about higher education in Brazil, and also to the social interaction of foreign young students and the molding of their identity as "subjects present on someone else's land" (Gusmão, 2008, p.1).

2. Immigration: some important concepts

As stated by Subuhana (2005, p.13), rephrasing Sayad (1998), immigration is the displacement of populations for all forms of space socially constituted and qualified, being "a complete social fact". The immigrant would be then, according to this author, a foreign citizen who has fixed residence in a country other than his or her own.

Regarding the particular case under investigation here, we can assert that immigration occurs in a provoked and temporary way, often involving cooperation agreements between the sovereign states of origin and destination, or even between institutions of higher education; which therefore may not be determined primarily as a mere political or economic relationship.

Subuhana (2005) reminds us that no identity is so rigid, solid and crystallized that cannot be questioned. The culture of the chosen country will cause significant impacts on the identity of an immigrant. Their values, their characteristics, their beliefs (their identity) will constantly be shocked by the foreign cultural assets abroad. From this confrontation, he will 'choose' to adopt or repudiate a cultural habit to which he has been exposed, and this 'choice' will leave "scratches" on his identity.

3. Bilateral Educational and Cultural Cooperation Agreements

Education has become one of the themes that managed to diversify the relations of international cooperation in the past decades. To Lanni (1996 cited in the Desiderio, 2005, p.3), this is a topic "inherent to the globalization of the social subject". On this study will shall not go into all the existing agreements in the educational field. We will stick to the Students-Agreement Undergraduate Program (PEC-G) and the ones related with the Navy Command, in particular the Maritime Professional Education and, the one, which is the focus of this article, the formation of foreigners as Officers in the Brazilian Navy Academy.

3.1. The Students-Agreement Undergraduate Program

With the increasing number of students from the Latin American countries included in Brazilian universities by individual and sporadic initiatives, emerged to meet this demand, in the 1920s the PEC-G (Mungoi, 2006). From the 1990s, according to Gusmão (2008), with the creation of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPPL),

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