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## **Globalization and Internationalization in Higher Education: Challenges and Opportunities in a Neoliberal Context**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Globalization emerged through the overseas expansion of European countries in the 15th century and the formation of a world history. Today it is reinforced through the growing interconnection and cooperation between scientists, institutions and communities in the generation, dissemination and application of scientific knowledge and the recognition of education as a marketable good. The globalization of higher education offers significant opportunities for the advancement of knowledge and the resolution of global problems, although it also poses important challenges.*

*The internationalization of higher education involves integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension in higher education, balancing particularisms and internationalism. This balance considers cultural particularities and global collaborations, adapting to local contexts while adopting global practices. Internationalization is a multidimensional phenomenon; as a complex system, it involves a dynamic interaction between academic, economic, cultural, political, technological and social dimensions. Technological advances and international policies influence this process, while long-term planning, national policies, understanding of cultural differences and the integrative drive of Latin American universities are crucial for a deep and comprehensive internationalization.*

*In addition, it is about confronting a hegemonic neoliberal model and its impact on higher education, the transformation of education into a marketable good and structural inequalities and job insecurity. It is about denaturalizing the imposition of neoliberal values and structures, recognizing the institutional crises in Argentine public state universities, building a decolonizing internationalization, the integration of multicultural and interdisciplinary global dimensions and the revaluation of education as a social good.*

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### **Introduction**

Globalization emerged through the overseas expansion of European countries in the 15th century and the formation of a world history. Today it is reinforced through the growing interconnection and cooperation between scientists, institutions and communities in the generation, dissemination and application of scientific knowledge and the recognition of education as a marketable good.

Globalization is a multifaceted process involving the growing interconnection and interdependence of countries worldwide and is characterized by the integration of national economies through trade, foreign direct investment, and capital flows, the advancement of information and communication technologies (ICTs) that enable rapid and efficient communication and data transfer worldwide, the free movement of capital and labor across borders, the spread of ideas, values, and cultural practices worldwide, and the emergence of entities such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank, which play important roles in regulating and facilitating trade and international economic cooperation.

This phenomenon has multiple dimensions and consequences, both positive and negative. The globalization of higher education constitutes a complex phenomenon that offers significant opportunities for the advancement of knowledge and the resolution of global problems, but also poses important challenges. International collaboration must be inclusive and equitable, respecting local diversities and promoting a fair distribution of the benefits of scientific progress.

Different authors have addressed globalization from different perspectives, providing a theoretical and empirical framework to understand how global dynamics affect the production, dissemination and application of scientific knowledge. The internationalization of higher education appears as a response to the phenomenon of globalization, where universities experience processes of regional integration in tension with the local-international.

The globalization of higher education assumes its complexity and multidimensionality and has been addressed by various authors and academics. For her part, Jane Knight asserts that “globalization affects each country differently, in relation to its history, traditions, culture and priorities [...]” (1999, p. 20). Similarly, Knight describes the concept of educational internationalization as “one of the ways in which a country responds to the impact of globalization, respecting the individuality of each nation [...]” (1999, p. 20).

As Sánchez Gutiérrez Romero Huesca (2022) suggests, the globalized and capitalist development model has influenced economies and sectors of society, including higher education, especially in the West. This model has – according to the authors – transformed higher education into a commodity rather than a public good, increasing the costs of public institutions, a situation that is aggravated in emerging and less developed countries.

### **Globalized Science**

Sheila Jasanoff (2004) has described the interaction between science, technology and society, examining how science and technology are influenced by cultural, political and social contexts. John Ziman (1994) explored the nature of science as a social activity, analyzing how the dynamics of globalization affect the production and organization of scientific knowledge. Ulrich Beck (1992, 2008), known for his work on risk society theory, coined the concept of "reflexive modernity" and his studies on global risks include reflections on the globalization of science and how it faces and responds to global risks.

Globalization theories are a set of perspectives and approaches that seek to understand and explain the phenomenon of globalization, its causes, characteristics and consequences, and how colonizing logics are supported by a self-perception of superiority of certain nations, perpetuating Western-centric visions and marginalizing peripheral nations. In this context, there is a need to rethink the internationalization of higher education from a decolonizing perspective (Sánchez Gutiérrez Romero Huesca, 2022) that integrates global, multicultural and interdisciplinary dimensions, and that strengthens the capacities and competencies of local educational institutions.

### **Knowledge production in a globalized society**

Michael Gibbons (1997) along with other authors, introduced the concept of "Mode 2" in knowledge production, which refers to the production of knowledge in contexts of application, characterized by interdisciplinarity and transnationality. Modes of knowledge production refer to the various ways of creating and validating knowledge within scientific practice. Throughout history, these forms have evolved, reflecting transformations in both methodologies and social and economic relations that influence how knowledge is produced and applied. Gibbons et al. (1997) emphasize that these transformations do not occur in isolation, but interact and combine, altering the modes of knowledge in a

specific context.

One of the key aspects of the modes of knowledge production is their connection with economic and social development, since this is not only generated based on the historical context, but also becomes a crucial factor for the economic development of societies.

In knowledge production modes 1 and 2, although research and intervention may share some common points, they are fundamentally different processes. Research is oriented towards the clarification and understanding of the object of study, seeking to unravel its complexity and provide a detailed view of the phenomenon studied. On the other hand, intervention focuses on direct action to solve specific problems. According to Pérez Lindo (2016), while research seeks to know and understand a reality, intervention is oriented towards the direct transformation of a problematic situation and although both processes can share tools and methods to address an object of study, their objectives are substantially different. Research can lead to the creation of instruments and intervention strategies, but its main objective is knowledge. In contrast, intervention has as its immediate objective transformative action, seeking to solve concrete problems in a given context.

The modes of knowledge production, especially Mode 3, reflect an evolution in how knowledge is perceived and used, underlining the importance of the articulation between research and intervention to address contemporary social needs and challenges.

Helga Nowotny (2001) has worked extensively on the sociology of knowledge and the interaction between science and society, addressing how globalization transforms scientific practices and the relationship between science and society. Manuel Castells (2006, 2012) examines the information society and the knowledge economy and analyzes how globalization and communication networks impact the production and dissemination of scientific knowledge. Immanuel Wallerstein (2004) is known for his analysis of world-systems and has discussed how global power and economic structures influence the production of scientific knowledge.

Each mode of knowledge production is characterized by a set of conceptual, epistemological, methodological and political stakes. These stakes define the role of the actors, the practices and the contexts in which both research and intervention are developed. In particular, Mode 3 of knowledge stands out for its focus on the recognition of communities within research and intervention processes, which seek to materialize real social demands and address the challenges facing education and universities.

### **Internationalization of higher education**

The internationalization of higher education is a process that involves the integration of an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purposes, functions and delivery of post-secondary education. This phenomenon responds to a series of factors and manifests itself in various ways, affecting educational institutions as well as students, academic and administrative staff, and the educational policies of countries. Among the factors that drive the internationalization of higher education, we can mention the growing interconnection of economies, cultures and societies worldwide, which drives higher education institutions to prepare students for a globalized environment; the fact that universities seek to improve their prestige and academic quality through international collaborations, joint research, and attracting international talent, both students and academic staff; the growing mobility of students internationally, both outbound (students studying abroad) and inbound (foreign students studying in the country), is a key component of internationalization; advances in technology and communication facilitate collaboration and the exchange of knowledge between institutions in different countries; and policies and programs that promote internationalization.

It is necessary to deepen the concepts and meanings associated with the internationalization of higher education, guided by colonizing logics that impose neoliberal values and structures, promoting deregulation, liberalization and privatization. These logics have allowed the creation and birth of structural asymmetries and inequalities, affecting both teachers and university graduates who face precarious working conditions, restrictive economies and a lack of adequate opportunities in the labor market.

## Contexts of higher education

The context of higher education has undergone a significant transformation over the last 25 years due to increasing internationalization, driven by factors such as increased student mobility, expansion of overseas campuses, validated degree programs, franchising and joint qualifications. This internationalization is a response to the opportunities and challenges of globalization, and is considered essential for the economic and social well-being of nations and their citizens. Current trends in global higher education show a clear inclination towards privatization and commodification, highlighting the globalization of educational processes, post-graduation and virtualization.

At the international level, academic trends are observed such as the flexibility of the curriculum, the granting of intermediate degrees, the shortening of careers, educational models based on competencies, the increase in virtual education without borders, continuing education throughout life, interdisciplinary work, international study plans, the recognition of studies through credit systems (Beneitone, 2008), and the rise of foreign language certifications.

The globalized hegemonic model, based on neoliberal principles, notes Sánchez Gutiérrez Romero Huesca (2022), has profoundly influenced higher education. This model has transformed education from a public good to a commercial good, disinvesting in public universities and exacerbating structural inequalities. In Latin America, this disinvestment has resulted in the precarious employment of teachers and the lack of adequate opportunities for university graduates.

The current characteristics of higher education include the promotion of new learning dynamics, the establishment of international quality standards, global academic cultures and the pressure towards new global relevance. However, the reasons why internationalization does not have a more prominent role in Latin American universities are still not clearly identified. Despite having a favorable view towards internationalization and carrying out some international cooperation activities and agreements, these universities lack systematized policies and strategies for internationalization.

The development of knowledge and science in the global knowledge economy requires universities to recognize the importance of internationalizing the curriculum in their study plan because there are demands for a professional profile based on competencies in the educational programs of all disciplines. Such competencies of university students tend to reflect their knowledge, capacities, skills and values to interact in a more globally interconnected and culturally diverse world.

Mollis (2003) argues that the diagnoses of the quality crisis in higher education in underdeveloped countries are the result of a "North American-centric" perspective developed by international credit agencies. The "North Americanization" of the university model is evidenced by the place assigned to instrumental knowledge and the subordination of national and local development to the global dynamics of hegemonic countries. Accordingly, the importance of higher education would grow due to the increasingly important role of knowledge in the global economy, where the geopolitics of knowledge and power divides the world between countries that consume knowledge and countries that produce human resources, in this perspective.

In recent decades, higher education systems in Latin America have experienced a strong expansion and diversification due to the growing demand for tertiary studies, which has led to the incorporation of private institutions, the location of institutions in remote regions, and an expansion of the educational offer. In addition, as a strategy to improve the quality of education, countries have encouraged the internationalization of programs and careers (Quiroga, 2019).

Since 2020, with the emergence and development of the COVID 19 Pandemic, with all its difficulties and harmful effects, the global education system in general and higher education institutions, among other consequences, suffered the closure of their buildings and facilities and traditional face-to-face education moved to virtual classrooms and platforms (Quiroga, 2020).

Latin American universities still do not have adequate organizational structures to integrate and manage international activities that improve their substantive functions. Although they carry out various academic activities and programs, they have not yet managed to fully incorporate internationalization policies and practices into their regular curricula.

The current process of internationalization in higher education is a response to the growing globalization in this area. It is related to the adoption of a common academic model, the creation of a global academic market, the use of English as an international language, the expansion of distance education and the use of the Internet, the formation of alliances between institutions, the creation of campuses abroad and the harmonization of academic assessment and measurement structures (Altbach, 2006; Altbach and Knight, 2007; Knight, 2012, Perrota, 2015).

Internationalization, with its multiple meanings, challenges universities in their fundamental missions. The international dimension is intrinsically present in the very concept of university and its evolution (Sebastián, 2011). Traditionally, the intensity of this dimension has been associated with the quality and prestige of universities, but currently the concept of internationalization is being shaped by a mercantilist approach to higher education (Sebastián, 2011).

Since the 1980s, the process of internationalization has been driven by the rise of knowledge in the global sphere, a more qualified labor market, and greater interconnection between producers and consumers of knowledge. This process is rooted in the neoliberal world economic order, which promotes the deregulation of educational services and investments. However, this puts at risk the traditional ideals of universities, the culture of institutions and nations, as well as national and institutional control of education. The norms and values of developed countries tend to displace those of developing countries, raising concerns about the autonomy of States and universities. A crucial question for the future will be how to maintain academic independence and quality control in an environment where trade in educational products is free and international regulation is increasingly strong (Altbach, 2001; Perrota, 2015).

However, there are alternative experiences of internationalization that are defined by the deepening of actions of international cooperation based on solidarity, based on the search for complementarities between institutions and countries, guided by the principle of reciprocity and with the objective of achieving mutual understanding, dialogue and the construction of bridges of intersubjective understanding (Naidorf, 2005; Perrota, 2012; Perrota, 2015). This type of internationalization, characterized as solidarity according to Perrota (2015), is mainly linked to the formation of academic networks, as opposed to the hegemonic scheme that the same author calls Phoenician. These networks are based on cooperation and complementarity between institutions and countries, promoting mutual understanding, dialogue and the creation of bridges of intersubjective understanding (Quiroga, 2019). This allows for greater interaction between institutions and their academic communities, encourages networking and strengthens regional integration processes in Latin America.

### **Educational Integration in MERCOSUR**

The MERCOSUR Educational Sector (SEM) is a key institution in the configuration of regional educational policies in South America. The SEM is made up of various bodies, such as the Regional Coordinating Commission for Higher Education (CRC-ES), the Postgraduate Working Group and the Working Group for the Recognition of Degrees. Its actions in higher education focus on three main axes: recognition or accreditation, mobility and inter-institutional cooperation. These advances have been incremental, starting with accreditation and evolving towards mobility and inter-institutional cooperation programs.

According to Perrota (2015), regional integration processes in South America are promoting policies of internationalization of higher education through agreements such as MERCOSUR, the Andean Community of Nations (CAN), the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America - People's Trade Treaty (ALBA-TCP), the Pacific Alliance and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). These initiatives have made university cooperation between governments and universities in the region visible. Perrota (2015) identifies three trends of internationalization in regionalism strategies: one that follows the global trend without questioning it, another that approaches it, but questions certain aspects, and a third that is critically opposed to the global trend. MERCOSUR, through the SEM, seeks to institutionalize educational policies in South America. The Meeting of Ministers of Education is the highest body of the SEM, and the work is organized by the Regional Coordinating Committee, with the aim of improving the quality of education, stimulating evaluation and promoting mobility and cooperation between universities.

In 1992, in Las Leñas, Argentina, the bodies of the Treaty of Asunción approved the Three-Year Plan for the Education Sector of MERCOSUR and created the Regional Coordinating Committee and the Meeting of Ministers. This initiative demonstrated the willingness of the region's universities to cooperate, beyond local governments and policies. This Committee has formed technical working groups in various areas: technological education, higher education, official languages of MERCOSUR and information systems.

MERCOSUR education has been a pioneer in the convergence of higher education at a regional level, particularly in the recognition of degrees for professional practice and academic mobility. The accreditation process for undergraduate courses began in 1998 with the Experimental Mechanism for Accreditation of Undergraduate Courses (MEXA), an action within the framework of the Cultural and Educational MERCOSUR, which began operating in 1991. One of the main achievements of educational cooperation in MERCOSUR was the signing of the Protocol for Educational Integration and Recognition of Studies, Degrees and Certificates on August 4, 1994 in Buenos Aires. This protocol stipulated that the States Parties (Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay and Brazil) would recognize studies, degrees and certificates in primary and non-technical secondary education obtained in their authorized institutions.

### **Association of Universities of the Montevideo Group**

The Association of Universities of the Montevideo Group (AUGM) is a network of public, autonomous and self-governed universities in Latin America, which share similarities in their academic structures and objectives. The AUGM is a network of public universities in Latin America, mainly from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay and Bolivia. This network was created to promote scientific, technological, educational and cultural cooperation among its members, and aims to strengthen regional integration and improve the quality of higher education in the region.

The Association of Universities of the Montevideo Group (AUGM) is a network of public, autonomous and self-governed universities in Latin America, founded in 1991, which share similarities in academic structures and objectives. Its purpose is to contribute to the strengthening and consolidation of high-level human resources, scientific and technological research, continuing education and interaction with society. The AUGM promotes scientific, technological, educational and cultural cooperation among its members, promoting public education, research and the preservation of regional culture. AUGM implements various programs, including mobility, young researcher days, summer and winter schools, and international seminars.

Founded in August 1991, its purpose is to strengthen and consolidate high-level human resources, promote scientific and technological research, facilitate continuing education, improve university management, and encourage interaction with society. The main objective of AUGM is to promote regional integration through scientific, technological, educational, and cultural cooperation among its members. Its goals include the development and strengthening of public education, the training of highly qualified human resources, the promotion of scientific and technological research, the promotion of continuing education, and interaction with the community in general.

AUGM supports the implementation of postgraduate courses, multi- and interdisciplinary programs, exchanges of teachers, researchers, students, and managers, as well as programs in strategic areas, projects linked to the productive sector, environmental management programs, and plans to preserve and disseminate regional culture. Currently, AUGM carries out a dozen programs, including mobility programs, the Young Researchers' Days, the Summer and Winter Schools, the Network of Cities and Universities, and the International University-Society-State Seminar

However, the participation of universities in AUGM can vary in terms of commitment and activity for several reasons. Many universities in Latin America face budgetary restrictions that may limit their ability to actively participate in international networks. Institutional priorities and strategies may vary, and some universities may focus more on local or national issues rather than regional cooperation, lack of adequate infrastructure for international cooperation, such as dedicated international relations offices, may hinder effective participation in networks such as AUGM, national regulations and internal bureaucracy may hinder the implementation of international cooperation and mobility programs, lack of awareness about the opportunities and benefits of participating in networks such as AUGM, as well as communication issues, may be barriers, and disparities in terms of resources and capacities between member universities

may create challenges for equitable and effective collaboration. Despite these challenges, AUGM continues to work to strengthen cooperation and improve higher education in the region by offering mobility and exchange programs.

### Particularisms and Internationalism in the Internationalization of Higher Education

The study of the internationalization of higher education often involves a balance between two contrasting tendencies, particularism and internationalism, approaches that reflect different perspectives and priorities.

Particularism refers to the tendency to focus on the specific characteristics and needs of national or local contexts. In research on the internationalization of higher education, particularism can manifest itself in several aspects. Priority is given to the cultural, historical and socio-economic particularities of each country or region and research can focus on how local universities adopt and adapt international practices to align with their specific contexts. Examination of country-specific internationalization policies and strategies, considering how national authorities promote internationalization in their higher education systems and the impact of internationalization on the local community, including the effects on the local economy, culture and employment. This can include the evaluation of student and academic mobility programs from a local perspective.

### **Internationalism**

Internationalism, on the other hand, focuses on the global and universal aspects of the internationalization of higher education. This approach emphasizes collaboration and global trends. It focuses on international mobility and research on the flows of students, academics and administrative staff at a global level, and how these movements affect educational institutions and the individuals involved, the study of alliances and collaborations between universities from different countries, including research consortia, joint programs and strategic partnerships, global trends and the analysis of international trends and practices in higher education, such as the adoption of global quality standards, internationalization of the curriculum, and use of educational technology and shared global challenges such as global competition, equity and accessibility in higher education, and academic migration policies.

The relationship between particularism and internationalism in research on the internationalization of higher education is not dichotomous, but rather there is an interdependence and constant tension.

We can test a relationship between particularisms and internationalism in terms of the divergent processes and trends of higher education adaptation and standardization, in terms of local benefits and global collaboration, the glocal perspective in a mix between the local and the global and existing policies and regulations (Quiroga, 2020). While particularism emphasizes the adaptation of international practices to local contexts, internationalism promotes standardization and the adoption of global practices. Institutions and researchers must balance the need to maintain local identity and relevance with the adoption of global standards that can improve quality and competitiveness. Universities must find a balance between maximizing local benefits (economic, cultural, educational) and participating in international networks and collaborations that can bring long-term advantages. The concept of “glocalization” can be useful in this balance, where one seeks to adapt global trends to local needs, combining the strengths of both approaches. Researchers and policy makers must consider how national and international policies interact and how regulations can support effective internationalization that respects local particularities. Studying the internationalization of higher education requires a balanced approach that considers both local particularities and global trends and collaborations. Researchers and policymakers should work to harmonize these approaches, recognizing the importance of both for the sustainable and equitable development of higher education.

### **Dimensions that interact between the internationalization of higher education as concrete wholes and complex systems**

To better understand how the dimensions, interact in the internationalization of higher education when considered as concrete wholes and complex systems, it is essential to break down these dimensions and analyze their interactions.



## Interacting Dimensions

In terms of the academic dimension, the internationalization of the curriculum does not only imply the inclusion of global content, but also pedagogical adaptation for different cultural and academic contexts, student and academic mobility promotes the exchange of knowledge and cultures, but also requires support systems that recognize and manage differences in educational expectations and methods, and joint research projects benefit institutions by sharing resources and knowledge, but also present challenges in the coordination and alignment of objectives between different educational systems.

Regarding the economic dimension, the financing of international initiatives may depend on national policies and the ability to attract external funds. Investment in infrastructure and support programs for international students is essential and universities compete in a global market to attract students and academic talent, which implies marketing strategies, educational quality and the offer of internationally relevant programs.

The cultural dimension addresses the presence of a diverse community on campus, enriches the educational environment and promotes intercultural understanding, but requires inclusive policies and practices to ensure effective integration. Cultural exchange programs facilitate mutual learning and appreciation of different perspectives, although they may also face resistance or cultural misunderstandings.

On the political side, national policies can encourage or restrict internationalization, influencing the ability of universities to establish international alliances and attract foreign students, and educational institutions can serve as instruments of diplomacy, building international relations and promoting peace and global understanding.

On the technological side, distance and online education platforms allow internationalization without physical barriers, facilitating access to global education. The adoption of advanced technologies in teaching and research can improve educational quality and international collaboration.

In the social dimension, internationalization processes should consider equity in access to international opportunities, ensuring that all students, regardless of their origin, have the same opportunities. Furthermore, the evaluation and management of the social impact of internationalization activities on local and global communities is crucial for ethical and sustainable practice.

## Interaction in Concrete Wholes and Complex Systems

"Significant structures" in Lucien Goldmann's theory constitute a key concept that seeks to understand the relationship between the social significance of artistic, literary or philosophical works and the historical process of their genesis. For Goldmann (1984) these structures should not be understood in isolation or as mere representations of material reality (infrastructure) or subjective consciousness (superstructure). Instead, Goldmann rejects the traditional Marxist dichotomy that separates material infrastructure from ideological superstructure, as well as the reflection theory that postulates a unidirectional relationship between the two. Goldmann (1962), influenced by Lukács's theory of reification, proposes an approach that overcomes this polarity between the subjective and the objective. According to him, meaningful structures arise from the constitutive interactions between individuals and their social context, which means that there is no rigid separation between subject and object, or between individual and collective. These structures are dynamic and constantly changing, reflecting the internal coherence between the works and the social structures from which they emerge. This approach allows Goldmann (1984) to articulate a method that is both comprehensive, understanding the structures of meaning, and explanatory, recognizing their historical process. In this framework, works are not just a passive reflection of their context, but actively participate in the creation and transformation of social structures. "Significant structures," then, become a bridge that connects the internal coherence of a work with its historical-social context, allowing for a deeper understanding of the relationship between culture and society.

The relationship between Lucien Goldmann's "meaningful structures" and the internationalization of higher education can be understood through an approach that considers how underlying social and cultural dynamics influence educational practices and policies at a global level.

The internationalization of higher education can be seen as a "meaningful structure" in Goldmann's sense, as it involves a set of practices, values, and norms that reflect and constitute a response to global social, economic, and political conditions. These structures not only describe educational reality, but also actively participate in the creation and maintenance of an international educational framework. In the internationalization of higher education, there is an effort to create coherence between diverse cultures, educational systems, and academic perspectives. Goldmann would speak of how educational institutions attempt to integrate these diverse influences within a coherent framework that both reflects and is part of global social and cultural structures. This coherence is dynamic and responds to interactions between different international educational actors, students, academics, and government policies.

The evolution of internationalization can be understood through Goldmann's notion of "historical genesis," which analyzes how meaningful structures in higher education have changed over time due to historical processes, such as globalization, technological development, and international political changes. This allows us to see internationalization not only as an educational policy, but as a phenomenon that has deep roots in global social and economic changes. In internationalization, the "collective subject" can be understood as the global community of students, scholars, and administrators who participate in the creation and sustainment of these meaningful structures. Internationalized higher education creates subjects that are coherent with the demands and structures of a globalized world, where individuals are expected to be able to navigate and contribute to diverse cultural and academic contexts.

In the other hand, interaction and exchange expose collaboration between international institutions and generate synergies that enhance educational quality and research opportunities. Differences in educational systems, regulations and expectations can generate tensions that must be managed to achieve effective internationalization. Institutions and educational systems are globally interconnected, and actions in one country can have repercussions in others. However, interdependence requires careful coordination and aligned policies to maximize mutual benefits. Adaptability and resilience is the ability to adapt to rapid changes in the international environment, such as political or economic crises, is crucial. Institutions must develop resilience strategies that allow them to maintain their internationalization objectives. Institutions and educational systems co-evolve, influencing each other, in this way the internationalization strategies of universities drive changes in the internal structures and policies of institutions, while they learn and shape international practices. Cultural and academic diversity introduces complexity in the management of internationalization. Strategies must be flexible and adaptable, recognizing local particularities while benefiting from global opportunities.

The internationalization of higher education, seen as a concrete totality and a complex system, involves a dynamic interaction between multiple dimensions. A deep understanding of these dimensions and their interactions allows for the development of balanced strategies that integrate local particularities and global trends, promoting effective, inclusive and sustainable internationalization.

### **Time and space as constituents of its objects of study**

To delve deeper into how time and space act as constitutive elements of the internationalization of higher education, it is necessary to explore how these dimensions influence the processes, strategies and outcomes of internationalization.

Historical time offers us the perspective of how internationalization has evolved over time and helps to understand trends and changes in policies, approaches and objectives. For example, early academic mobility initiatives and student exchanges can be contrasted with current strategic alliances and transnational programs. Colonial history and past relations between countries can influence the current dynamics of internationalization, affecting student preferences and collaborations between universities.

Cyclical timing – the structure of academic calendars in different regions of the world can affect the timing of exchange and collaboration programs. Alignment of semesters and academic years is crucial to facilitate student mobility and inter-institutional cooperation. The development phases of institutions (e.g. expansion, consolidation and renewal phases) influence their capabilities and approaches to internationalization.

Future timing – long-term planning is essential for the sustainability of internationalization. This includes foreseeing global trends in education, technology and mobility, as well as anticipating economic and political challenges. Technological and pedagogical innovations change the way higher education is internationalized. Adoption of emerging technologies can accelerate internationalization and open new opportunities for global collaboration.

Geographic space: Distance between countries and institutions can present logistical and financial barriers to student and academic mobility. Geographically close regions may have advantages in collaboration, while greater distances may require innovative solutions. The location of institutions in different regions of the world influences collaboration opportunities and the ability to attract international students. Universities in global cities or strategic regions may have significant advantages.

Cultural space plays a role, as cultural differences between countries and regions affect internationalization. Understanding and respecting cultural differences is critical to effective collaboration and the success of mobility programs. Institutions can create symbolic “international spaces” through global campuses, joint programs, and international research centers that transcend geographic barriers.

In addition, technology has created new spaces for internationalization through online platforms that facilitate distance education, research collaboration, and communication between global students and scholars. Academic and research networks transcend physical borders, creating virtual communities of practice and learning that facilitate internationalization in a technological space.

### **Peripheral universities and integration**

Sánchez Gutiérrez and Romero Huesca (2012) propose a reflection on the internationalization of higher education, focusing on the effects of the hegemonic discourse and its impact on the countries of the “periphery,” especially in Latin America. They point out that Latin American countries face direct consequences of the hegemonic model, such as structural inequality and high levels of poverty, which negatively affect access to higher education.

To address the question of what type of internationalization of higher education the authors indicate is necessary from a decolonizing perspective to empower national actors and local knowledge, a documentary analysis was carried out using various conceptual and official sources, including ECLAC, UNESCO, OECD and critical reflections from CLACSO, as well as intellectuals such as Boaventura de Sousa Santos and other Latin American authors.

A decolonizing approach to the internationalization of higher education is necessary to counteract the negative effects of the hegemonic model, empower national actors and value local knowledge, proposing a critical reflection on educational policies and their implications in peripheral countries such as those in Latin America.

Traditionally, the internationalization of higher education has not been approached from a critical perspective, focusing on how the hegemonic discourse negatively affects peripheral countries, especially in Latin America. This approach should examine how disinvestment in public universities and the loss of their character as a public good have contributed to an institutional crisis in these countries.

The internationalization of higher education has been guided by colonizing logics that impose neoliberal values and structures, promoting deregulation, liberalization and privatization. These logics create and perpetuate structural asymmetries and inequalities, affecting both teachers and university graduates who face precarious working conditions and a lack of adequate opportunities in the labor market.

Colonizing logics, promoted by supranational platforms such as the OECD and the European Union, impose Western-centric educational standards and models that perpetuate inequalities and marginalize countries in the global South.

It is therefore necessary to promote a decolonizing internationalization of higher education, which incorporates global, multicultural and interdisciplinary dimensions, and which strengthens local capacities and empowers national actors. This approach must counteract asymmetries and promote an education that responds to the specific needs and contexts of peripheral countries, valuing education as a social good rather than a commercial good.

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